



MARINES TO SHIFT MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

Marines in Afghanistan will shift focus to security force assistance as they reduce their footprint in the Helmand province this summer, the top commander in the region said recently. "There is a...limit on how much time we have to continue to support and help our Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) partners," said Maj. Gen. Charles Gurganus, commander of I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) and Regional Command Southwest (RC-SW). "But I will tell you, they have become extremely capable within the means they have." RC-SW now has about 15,800 Marines, down from about 17,000 in March and a high of about 21,000 last year.



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THREE-PEAT: MARINES TAKE CHAIRMAN'S CUP AT WARRIOR GAMES



The All-Marine Warrior Games team won the Chairman's Cup for the third year in a row at the 2012 Warrior Games in Colorado Springs, Colo., May 1-5. "These Marines represent all that is good about our Corps. Their efforts and successes reflect that they still have a lot to give. As a matter of fact, they are thriving," said Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Micheal Barrett. Marines claimed 89 medals competing against wounded warriors from the other branches of service in archery, cycling, shooting,

wheelchair basketball, seated volleyball, swimming, and track and field. In the shooting competition alone, Marines took 20 of the 24 medals.

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AFGHAN SOLDIERS LEAD OPERATION 'HIGH NOON' TO SUCCESS

The Afghan National Army (ANA) dispatched nearly 200 soldiers to clear compounds and search for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and weapon caches April 23-26 in Trek Nawa, an area between the Marjah and Nawa districts of the Helmand province. Marines from 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment provided extra firepower and logistical support as needed. "This is an [insurgent] hotspot and we [were] engaged by as many as 10 insurgents, found IEDs, weapons caches, you name it," said 1st. Lt. Joseph Hoeksema said. After three days, the ANA troops returned



without a single casualty and captured a suspected insurgent leader.

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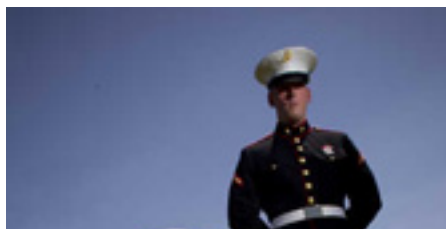
FEMALE ENGAGEMENT TEAMS ARE KEY LINK TO AFGHAN WOMEN

Marine Female Engagement Teams (FET) are gaining support from the local population and gleaning valuable intelligence in Afghanistan. "We help get a better understanding of the area and help influence the population," said Cpl. Mallory R. Ortiz, a FET member operating in the Musa Qa'leh district, Helmand province. In Afghan culture, men refrain from talking to women they aren't related to; therefore, male Marines are unable to communicate with Afghan women. "Being a female, the biggest advantage is instead of having access to only 50 percent of the population, as males do, we have access to 100 percent."

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TEXAN JOINS MARINES TO HONOR FRIEND KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN



James Hibler enlisted in the Marine Corps just a few weeks after the funeral of Staff Sgt. Jeremy Smith, a childhood friend who died in Afghanistan last year. "I had done a lot of things in my life, but I hadn't done enough to be satisfied," he said. "I wanted to feel what Jeremy did. I wanted to do for him what he had done for me." Hibler is



currently at Camp Pendleton, Calif., for additional combat training, and he hopes to eventually become a helicopter crew chief and door gunner. "I just think it's amazing that Jeremy is still inspiring people, even without him being here anymore," said Rachel Smith, his widow. "It keeps the memory of him going and that gives me such peace in my heart."

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ALL-MARINE WRESTLING TEAM HOLDS CLINIC WITH CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL GRAPPLERS



Members of the All-Marine wrestling team held a two-day clinic May 8-9 for Cleveland high school students ahead of Marine Week Cleveland. More than 60 students and coaches attended to learn from the Marine wrestlers. Following the technical instruction, the Marine wrestlers answered questions about their experiences in the Corps. Marine Week Cleveland, set to take place June 11-17, is a week-long celebration of Community, Country and Corps. Marine Week attendees will have the opportunity to climb aboard a variety of the Corps' aircraft and ground equipment at static display venues throughout downtown Cleveland. The week will culminate with a simulated full-scale combat demonstration, as the Marines highlight the

unique capabilities they use to fight our country's battles in the air, on land and at sea.

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MARINE CORPS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION DONATES 500 TICKETS TO MARINES

To celebrate and commemorate its 50th anniversary, the



Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation (MCSF) has donated 500 tickets to the Washington Nationals game versus the Baltimore Orioles, which will be held May 20 at Nationals Park, Washington, D.C. Tickets are available to active duty, reserve and retired Marines, and can be picked up at Marine Corps Community Services at Quantico, Henderson Hall, Va., and Marine Barracks, 8th St. SE, Washington, DC. On game day, ticket holders are also encouraged to stop by the MCSF booth at the stadium to receive a free baseball hat and to enter a drawing for an immediate upgrade for VIP seating.

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TRANSITION

WOUNDED WARRIORS RIDE THE WAVE TO REHABILITATION



The Jimmy Miller Memorial Foundation (JMMF) helped wounded Marines from Wounded Warrior Battalion West, Camp Pendleton, Calif., learn how to surf May 5. Ocean therapy is gaining recognition among military members for being an alternative means to enhance the recovery and rehabilitation for Marines challenged by Post Traumatic Stress Disorders, traumatic brain injuries and other mental and physical illness. "We found surfing to be a catalyst for the Marines that inspires them forward,"

said Carly Rogers, director of programs for the JMMF. "The ocean therapy program takes the sport of surfing and teaches Marines resilience themes and self-efficacy." The JMMF is a non-profit organization which provides free ocean therapy surf sessions to veterans, wounded warriors and youth from shelter facilities for abused and foster children.

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THANK YOU

STEAK TEAM MISSION GRILLS IN AFGHANISTAN



More than 2,000 service members at forward operating bases across Afghanistan recently dined on steak, coleslaw, cornbread and baked beans thanks to Steak Team Mission (STM), a non-profit organization based in Texas. The team of 11 civilian volunteers flew from the Lonestar State to Afghanistan with grills large enough for 40 steaks at a time and food supplies to serve thousands of meals in three days. "This is our way of giving back," said Ronnie Yankey, a STM member.

"We just want to give them a little taste of home." While at Fort Duluth, Helmand province, the STM members toured the base and interacted with the Marines. "It [was] a great treat and much appreciated," said Capt. Charles Anklam III, Weapons Company 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. "It is good to be recognized by American citizens."

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